



To ensure the Army can 'be all they can be' the Air Force teaches....

## Ground combat warriors the art of close air-support

By Staff Sgt. Ed Scott AWFC Public Affairs

Military programs such as Red Flag, the USAF Weapons School and the Navy's Top Gun school, teach pilots air-to-air and air-to-

When pilots need to hone their close air support skills, they turn to the Air Ground Operations School Air Warrior I based at cized training exercise, Red Flag. Nellis and Fort Irwin, Calif., or the Air War-Base and Fort Polk, La.

manders and their warriors to hone combat weapons in an no-scripted armored battle. skills, the Army created the 1,000 square mile U.S. Army National Training Center, located tractors although ground forces are some-communication between ground forces and at Fort Irwin, Calif., in 1981. AT NTC, britimes included in exercises. gade commanders, their staffs and soldiers participate in a simulated high intensity ar-

At the onset, the Army understood the need for their soldiers to have close air sup-Force to support their training exercises – creating Coronet Zap, supported by a detach-

Air Ground Operation School. Air Warrior pilots do not expend ordnance. currently conducts 10 exercises per year averaging 18 days.

ing Squadron commander, and Lt. Col. Dave employs live tank and artillery ordnance. Silvia, AGOS Det. 2 commander, share the responsibility to conduct the Air Warrior I ex- ous pop-up targets while pilots are called in ercise. The scenario operates similar to the to drop live munitions on tank hulks and other close air support portion of the more publi-

In the Air Warrior Scenario pilots flying rior II exercise based at Barksdale Air Force over the training center's range face approximately 400 armored vehicles and Realizing the need for U.S. Army com- 3,000 soldiers maneuvering and employing Red Flag generally works with range con-

from Nellis providing air support to the ex- overcome are for the Army and Air Force to port. The Army immediately asked the Air critical link between aviators and soldiers. threats and weather.

A typical Air Warrior exercise begins with a week of force-on-force exercises. During this Col. Rehm said. "The further out we can 357th and 358th Fighter Squadron A/OAment at the now closed George Air Force time, pilots fly CAS missions in ever-changing shoot from friendly forces the better due to 10s from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base,

ordnance on various targets at the live-fire quires close coordination with those friendly Lt. Col. Joe Rehm, 549th Combat Train- range area while the deployed Army unit Soldiers employ their ordnance against varisimulated artillery targets. Intermingled with the force-on-force and live fire battles are ex- air-to-ground munitions currently under test tended scenarios flying squadron specific train- and fielding. ing opportunities. These missions are flown to Leach Lake Tactical Range or the Nellis they've used it over the battlefield for imag-Tactical Range allowing CAS pilots to further hone their air-to-ground skills.

pilots flying close air support.

The 549th CTS supports flying squadrons Col. Rehm said the obstacles that must be intelligence gathering.

support is employment of air power in close The second week includes dropping live proximity of the friendly battle lines and reforces.

Looking into Air Warrior's crystal ball, Col. Rehm said he sees technology playing a larger part in their exercises, especially unmanned aerial vehicle systems like Predator, Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System and new

"The Army has a UAV called Hunter and ery and to identify targets with laser packages," he said. "We desire to bring Predator Success or failure also can be dictated by into Air Warrior I within the near future."

Predator roles could include real-time battlefield assessments, target acquisition and

"We are looking forward to a busy year," ercise, while Det. 2 supports the air support speak in the same language and for battle Col. Rehm said. "We plan on supporting all operations squadrons deployed on the commanders to understand which targets air the Pope Air Force Base, (N.C.), A/OA-10s ground with the Army units providing the can successfully strike depending on weapons, during the Air Mobility Command Rodeo, 69th Fighter Squadron F-16s from Moody Air "We concentrate on CAS, not interdiction," Force Base, (Ga.), JSTARS, EC-130Es and

